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An Appeal from Japan.

BY

C. A. CLARK.



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AN APPEAL FROM JAPAN.

Dear Fellow Missionary Volunteers :—

As one of the twenty-one in that first informal meeting at Mount Hermon, and as one of the first among the volunteers to go abroad, I am glad to write you of Japan's needs, in order that I may help you in deciding upon your field of future work.

That you might know the situation *as it truly is* in Japan, I have consulted by letter one missionary of every denomination in every city of Japan where there is a representative of any American missionary society. I will try to give you a composite picture of Japan, as taken by impressions from sixty-five communications received in answer to letters of inquiry sent out.

You are all familiar with the dark background of appalling statistics,—millions perishing without a knowledge of the Saviour, and so very few to tell them of Him. These are facts common to all unevangelized lands. But what do we see peculiar in

Japan's condition that calls for special missionary effort just now? If the situation were to be summed up in a single word, that word would be *transition*.

Within the present generation, God, using the squadron of our country, has opened the doors of this nation, formerly closed to all foreigners. Subsequent to the opening of the doors, He has restored the Emperor to his rightful place as ruler. He has overthrown feudalism, ancient and mighty, and made all men equal before the law. He has awakened the nation from Asiatic slumber of the centuries to a new and intensely vigorous life. He has filled the people with a desire to be like the Western nations.

The past two decades have been characterized by an eager search for, and imitation of, whatever has seemed to be the best in the civilization of the West. They have adopted Western models in commerce, politics, law, engineering, manufacturing, war tactics, schools, etc. The people are also eagerly seeking for light in regard to ethics and religion. Hitherto Shintoism, Buddhism, and Confucianism have given the nation her ethical and religious ideals. But

now the people are asking, with keenest interest, what better than these can the religion of the West give us. They are asking, indeed, with very much of prejudice and human love of sin, but yet ready to investigate; for the Japanese are not an irreligious people, as the temples and shrines "on every hill top and under every green tree" abundantly testify.

They are to-day crowding into schools both public and private. Missionaries, alert and awake to their opportunities, have opened schools for instruction, which have become magnificent mediums for evangelization. The young people, intellectual, active, and aggressive, will soon be the rulers of Japan and makers of her public sentiment.

Only eighteen years ago it was a capital crime to be a Christian; now the fullest religious liberty is guaranteed by the National Constitution proclaimed last year. The government, formerly despotic, this year assembles its first parliament under a constitution. All these changes have been brought about within the present generation: and so they go on.

These tremendous changes taking place so rapidly give you some idea of the crisis in Japan. They shew a nation prepared by God for the reception of the gospel,—prepared as no other Oriental or unevangelized nation has been.

But on the other hand, this condition of things makes Japan a field especially receptive to seeds of false teaching of all kinds,—seeds which are being silently sown by Satan and his agents in ten thousand ways. Anti-christian books, pamphlets, and periodicals are being widely circulated, and they are eagerly devoured by this thinking, reading, questioning generation. The influence of many foreign residents and visitors coming from Christian lands is decidedly anti-christian. The Buddhists, in self defence stirred up to do their utmost to oppose Christianity, have never been so active as now. They do not hesitate to misrepresent Christians and Christianity in every way possible. They are adopting new methods of work derived from Christians; as it were, dressing up their old systems in the garments of the new religion, and insisting that these systems are better than Christianity. Alas! how many are being deceived.

In such a crisis what are four hundred and fifty missionary men and women and one hundred and thirty-five native ministers among forty million people! Shall this impressionable civilization be Christian or unchristian? That is our responsibility, fellow volunteers, and the responsibility of the churches we represent. Satan seems to be concentrating his forces on this part of the great battle line, this strategic point of the East. Why should not the Church of Christ concentrate her forces here?

What additional forces are needed? The sixty-five letters bring back the report that the reinforcements needed in the several stations for the work *now in hand* are one hundred families, twenty-one unmarried men, and fifty-eight unmarried women; for the enlargement of the work which seems to be necessary at once, seventy-five additional families, fifteen unmarried men, and forty-six unmarried women are needed. These figures are the aggregates of the numbers given by individual men as their thoughtful estimate of the smallest force the work of their several fields requires. They do not include twenty-fives mentioned by two or three men of specially large outlook, nor

the one hundred or two hundred whom one writer of exceptional opportunity says he "could place, if we had them, where they would be alone and have a wide field of usefulness all around them;" nor the still larger figures of other enthusiastic writers. *They represent the smallest number needed at once.*

In answer to the question put to my fellow-workers, "Was there ever a time when the demand for more workers in your field was as great or greater than now?" a very emphatic and almost universal "NO" was the reply. The immediate need of reinforcements is emphasized greatly by the fact that a long time is needed for acquiring a knowledge of the language. Long before this necessary novitiate is ended, questions like treaty revision will be settled, and new and greatly added responsibilities will be laid upon the missionaries; and hence you need *to be here now*.

THE KIND OF REINFORCEMENTS NEEDED.

1. Men and women who know Jesus the Saviour, not only in well wrought out theory, but also by personal experience of His power: men and women who come for the

sole purpose of making Christ and His salvation known to the people.

2. Workers who can adapt themselves to a highly sensitive, intensely patriotic, and distinctively self-sufficient people.

3. Workers who are thoroughly educated, having had a seminary and college course, if possible. Remember, you are coming to a thinking, questioning, and educated people. The best educated will find that they know too little.

4. Those who come *for life*. The struggle is to be long and hard; and the greater your delay in coming, the longer and harder will this struggle be.

Please do not be so modest as to let this high standard (which the writers of these letters before me give) keep you from coming to our help. Moses at the burning bush was sinfully modest. Isaiah was wiser when he responded to God's call, "Here am I, send me." Remember the great promise, "Lo! I am with you always."

FOR WHAT WORK ARE THE REINFORCEMENTS NEEDED?

1. First, and chiefly, for direct, evangelistic work: for saving souls, pointing them

to "the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world."

2. For teaching. The demands for teaching are so great that every missionary will be called upon to do more or less of it while learning the language. Some, especially among the missionary ladies, will have to give themselves entirely to the work.

3. A few good physicians, such as are willing to be more missionary than physician.

4. Occasionally one is wanted for some special work.

To America's solicitation Japan first opened her doors. To America she has ever looked as her best friend. To American Christians, more than to any others, is entrusted the evangelization of this their nearest Asiatic neighbor.

Dear fellow volunteers, *what are you going to do about Japan?* In this her transitional state, unique among the unevangelized nations, shall the opportunity of the present be lost? Shall the inquiries of this people after Truth be left for atheists, agnostics, and Buddhists to answer? Shall the Gibraltar of the East be possessed by Satan? You, volunteers, are the ones to

whom we at the front must look for reinforcements. We have no other resource. We are trying to do our best; but the work is too great for us. We need you very much, and need you now. A year or two of delay on your part means very much to us here, and to you in the effectiveness of your life-work in Japan. Brothers and sisters, "come over and help us," and *come now*. May God guide you each to the field where your life will count the most.

Your brother,

C. A. CLARK.

KUMAMOTO, JAPAN,

May 3, 1890.

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